

Military Couple Assignment Policy

Background:

A working group on collocation for U.S. Navy service members was created in 2015 to develop a policy that places priority on collocating dual-military servicemembers. The change to policy is reflected in an update to MILPERSMAN 1300-1000

Talking Points:

- **The Navy works extremely hard to collocate our dual-military Sailors.** Our families are tremendously important to us and when a family is not whole, it can add stress to the lives of our Sailors. We are focused on establishing and maintaining households for families, and collocation of dual-military couples is a part of that and a priority *while balancing Fleet readiness.*
- **We're updating our collocation policy and distribution procedures, making orders negotiation less cumbersome for our dual military families.**
- **We're shifting from an "Opt-in" legacy system to an "Opt-out" way of thinking.** In the past, a Sailor was required to submit a personnel action request during each orders negotiation window, declaring that they desired to be collocated with their military spouse. Now, Sailors will submit an initial, one-time request to Navy Personnel Command via the sailor's chain of command -- that will remain in effect throughout the Sailor's dual-military career, unless *the sailor* tells the detailee otherwise. This change eliminates redundant and unnecessary paperwork and presumes that collocation is desired. Likewise, there are instances where the best interest of our Sailors may dictate otherwise. If Sailors chose not to be collocated for personal or career reasons, they may make their desire known to their detailee and negotiate appropriate orders.
- **We rely on the accuracy of Sailors' data.** It is vital that service members update their records anytime there is a change in their marital status.
- **We are making changes to our existing Personnel IT systems.** Adjustments to our personnel IT systems will better identify dual-military couples, providing detailers a better means to coordinate collocation during a Sailor's (or couple's) orders negotiating window.
- **A flag officer review is required when detailers can't make collocation work.** To ensure we have done everything possible to accommodate a dual-military collocation, when orders are going to be issued that would not collocate a dual military couple, a Flag review (ACNPC for Distribution (PERS 4)) will be required before they are issued.
- **The Navy is serious about making this work.** The Fleet is also invested in collocation. One example comes from the Submarine community. They are expanding the homeport choices for female officers, and for female enlisted, to better accommodate collocation of their dual-military families.

- Female officers' duty station choices are expanded to Pearl Harbor in December 2015 on USS Mississippi, and will expand to USS Texas in April of 2016, and to Norfolk, Virginia, on USS John Warner in FY 18.
- Female enlisted will also expand to Norfolk, Virginia on the Virginia Class Submarine, PCU New Jersey
- Navy is working with OSD to change the Department of Defense Instruction that governs personnel distribution, which would require services to coordinate collocation orders for dual military couples from two different services.

Statistics:

- As of November 2015, the Navy has over 20,000 service members married to another service member. Of those, we have 17,924 Navy dual-military (8,962 couples). The Navy works hard to station our servicemembers with spouses of a different branch of armed service. As of November 2015, there are 2,825 members married to someone in another service.
- Estimated percent of population in a Mil-to-Mil marriage
 - Female 14%
 - Male 3.5%

Questions and Answers:

Q. How many dual-military couples are there in your Service? Of those, what is the ratio of servicemen compared to servicewomen?

A. As of November, there are 20,749 Navy Service members with a military service spouse:

- 10,502 Navy Servicewomen
- 10,247 Navy Servicemen

Q. What is the primary change in the collocation policy?

A. The biggest change is that couples will no longer have to request a spouse collocation each time they negotiate for orders. Navy's focus extends beyond simply enabling dual-military couples to serve in the same location — we are dedicated to ensuring that our families are stationed together.

Q. How does the process start?

A. Establishing a dual-military family collocation starts when a dual-military couple marries and submits a one-time request to be collocated via the chain of command.

- For enlisted personnel, this is done with a NAVPERS 1306/7 Enlisted Personnel Action Request via the chain of command.
- For officers this is accomplished with a NAVPERS 1301/85 Officer Personnel Action Request.
- Both forms are available at <http://www.public.navy.mil/bupers-npc/reference/forms/NAVPERS/Pages/default.aspx>

Once the requests are received at Navy Personnel Command, the couples' status is annotated in the distribution systems; officer assignment information system (OAIS) for officers and enlisted assignment information system (EAIS) for enlisted.

Q. What if detailers can't get them collocated?

A. If for some reason a couple cannot be collocated, a waiver will require a flag officer-level review to ensure that all avenues were explored in the attempt to collocate the couple.

Q. Are there reasons that there could be a delay in establishing a collocation?

A. Couples that are not currently collocated or that have recently married may request collocation if they meet the following criteria:

- They must have a year aboard their current command.
- Neither member in the couple is under orders to go into a training status.
- There are no host-nation or Status of Forces Agreements (SOFA) restrictions that conflicts with the policy.
- When both members are eligible to roll to sea duty the spouse with the least amount of sea duty will normally be assigned to sea duty.

Q. How is this normally worked out?

A. Optimally, one service member is on shore duty while the other is on sea duty. Their projected rotation dates (PRDs) are matched to facilitate future reassignment, and the member on shore duty rotates to sea while the member on sea duty rotates to shore.

Q. What happens if they have a family?

A. All dual-military couples with dependents are required to fill out a dependent care plan, form NAVPERS 1740-6, which assigns responsibility for care of dependents when the service members are not available to do so. http://www.public.navy.mil/bupers-npc/reference/forms/NAVPERS/Documents/NAVPERS_1740-6_Rev02-11.pdf